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THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF RODBERTUS. By E. C. K. Gonner M.A., Brunner Professor of Economic Science at University College, Liverpool. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1899. Pp. xxi., 209.

Professor Gonner attempts to expound and at the same time to criticize the Social Philosophy of Rodbertus; if this task was worth doing, undoubtedly Professor Gonner has done it well. The book is well written, the exposition is clear, the criticisms well founded; but is there much value in expounding and trying to patch up a system which is wrong? In the cant phrase of the day we talk of an author as being "suggestive" or "stimulating" when we want to praise his theory and yet know that he is wrong. Rodbertus is suggestive and stimulating. To Rodbertus we owe much of the nonsense that is written about society being an organism, about its inward meaning, and what not. A biological metaphor cannot solve a difficulty, and affords but a poor excuse or substitute for careful thought and inquiry. The kernel of any system of economics is its theory of value. Rodbertus's theory of value is wrong. In his day Rodbertus was useful, at the present time he is merely interesting. The influence of Rodbertus in Germany has undoubtedly been great; in England his influence has been very small. Students to whom Rodbertus is but a name will learn from this book not only what Rodbertus' system is, but also the essential points in which it is wrong.

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